

# Let It Grow

Giving Nature a Hand with No Mow



## Stream Buffers



The City of Durham is giving nature a hand by allowing some stream buffers and other less-used areas to return to their natural habitat type. These sustainable, low-maintenance ecosystems allow trees, grasses, shrubs and other plants to filter pollutants in stormwater runoff before it enters a stream. Other benefits of No-Mow practices include:

### WATER QUALITY BENEFITS

- ▶ Naturally infiltrate, slow down, and clean stormwater runoff before it enters a creek
- ▶ Native trees and shrubs help protect stream banks, reducing erosion and sediment
- ▶ Native vegetation requires less use of fertilizer, water, and weed killer

### EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

- ▶ Offers places for nature study, public education, and wildlife observation
- ▶ Provides natural screens and noise control
- ▶ Is a sustainable practice to reduce the City's carbon footprint

### ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS

- ▶ Encourages establishment of native vegetation
- ▶ Increases biodiversity by providing food and habitat for native animals and plants
- ▶ Provides shade and cooler water temperatures for fish and aquatic insects

### COST SAVINGS BENEFITS

- ▶ Reduces mower maintenance and fuel costs
- ▶ Reduces fertilizer and chemical costs
- ▶ Reduces staff hours spent on mowing
- ▶ Reduces costs of repairing eroded areas of the stream bank



# F.A.Q. | Frequently Asked Questions

## ► What do the No-Mow signs mean?

No-Mow signs are installed to mark areas where habitat enhancement efforts are in place. The City may limit mowing within marked areas in some parks to encourage the growth of native vegetation. These natural areas provide benefits to water quality and the local ecology, and create cost savings to the City and its residents. No-Mow areas are being evaluated along some streams, lakes, or other places where natural habitat connections make sense for sustainable natural resource management.

## ► Can I still use the No-Mow areas?

No-Mow areas are still part of the park and will be open to the public for exploring and learning. To encourage growth of native vegetation, we ask that you respect the plants and animals in these areas. Occasionally these areas may be closed off for planting.

## ► Will other areas of the park continue to be mowed?

Yes! Regular maintenance of City Parks remains a priority for the City and will continue outside of the No-Mow areas.

## ► How will No-Mow areas develop over time?

These areas will go through a natural process called “ecological succession”. In this process, so called “pioneer plants” establish first. Over time, they are replaced by larger trees that form a shady, open canopy. Sometimes these areas may look brushy or scrubby, but please help us give nature a hand by being patient. Ecological succession can take years to complete but it will help to improve water quality and the health of our City’s streams, lakes, and drinking water supplies by filtering pollutants and reducing erosion. If you have any questions or concerns about these areas, please contact the City.

## More information

For information, please contact:

**City of Durham Parks and Recreation**  
(919) 560-4355

**City of Durham Stormwater Services**  
(919) 560-4326

